



ADVANCING SCIENCE, SERVING SOCIETY

Alan I. Leshner
Chief Executive Officer and
Executive Publisher, *Science*

December 17, 2010

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world's largest general scientific organization, I am writing to express our views on two legislative actions before you. First, we wish to thank you on the recent passage of the America COMPETES Act (H.R. 5116). AAAS believes that, in order to keep the United States at the forefront of technological development and economic growth, it is necessary to enhance budgets for fundamental and multidisciplinary research across multiple agencies, and invest in a better-prepared, better-educated domestic workforce.

The original America COMPETES Act was a hallmark of collaboration between the branches of government and across party lines, and we are pleased that the Senate was able to continue to work in bipartisan fashion to enact it again this session.

On the other hand, we are quite concerned about the provision in the Senate SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act of 2009 (S.1233) that would increase the allocation for the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program from 2.5 percent to 3.5 percent for federal agencies that fund more than \$100 million for research. Among other consequences, increasing this allocation would have the net effect of decreasing funding for the rest of science at a time when funding is already badly constrained. Rather than increase funding for one specific program, we believe it would be more prudent to work to increase funding for all research—such as that laid out in the America COMPETES Act—and thereby increase the total investment in the SBIR programs. We encourage you not to change the existing SBIR allocation of 2.5 percent.

Federal investment in research across agencies is critical to fostering innovation and drives our economy. We encourage you to continue to support the research enterprise.

Sincerely,

Alan I. Leshner